



Correlation Between Maternal Emotion Regulation and Husband Support on Early Breastfeeding Initiation Success Rates

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ABSTRACT

Early Breastfeeding Initiation (EBI) is an important step to improve infant health and survival. This study aims to determine the correlation between maternal emotion regulation and husband support on the success of EBI. This study used a quantitative cross-sectional design with a sample of 30 postpartum mothers selected through purposive sampling. The research was conducted in June 2025. The instruments used were tested for validity and reliability, namely the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and the Postpartum Partner Support Scale (PPSS). Data were analyzed using the chi-square test. The results showed that most mothers had low emotion regulation (40%) and moderate husband support (56.7%). A total of 53.3% of mothers successfully performed EBI. There was a significant correlation between maternal emotion regulation ($p = 0.003$) and husband support ($p = 0.036$) with the success of EBI. Maternal emotion regulation and husband support play an important role in supporting the success of EBI.

Keywords: EBI, Emotion Regulation, Husband Support

INTRODUCTION

Early Breastfeeding Initiation (EBI) is an important practice recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to improve infant survival and health, especially in developing countries. EBI is carried out by placing the baby on the mother's chest immediately after birth to enable skin-to-skin contact and active breastfeeding within the first hour of life (WHO, 2022). This practice has been proven effective in reducing neonatal mortality rates by up to 22%, strengthening the emotional bond between mother and baby, stabilizing the baby's body temperature, and promoting the provision of colostrum that is rich in antibodies and nutrients (Nababan et al., 2024).

Although it has many benefits, the implementation of EBI in Indonesia has not been optimal. The 2021 National Basic Health Survey (Riskesdas) reported that national EBI coverage decreased from 58.2% in 2018 to 48.6% in 2021 (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2022). Similarly, the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding declined from 64.5% in 2019 to 52.5% in 2021. Provincial data show a similar trend; for example, in West Java, EBI coverage decreased from 88.1% (2022) to 85.5% (2023), and in Cirebon

Regency from 81.92% to 80.34% in the same year (Diskominfo Jabar, 2024). These numbers are still below the national target of 90%.

Data from Depok Community Health Center (2023) showed that out of 120 births in Kejuden Village, only 60% of mothers successfully performed EBI optimally, while the remaining 40% experienced failure due to various factors such as infant conditions (e.g., asphyxia), postpartum complications, physical exhaustion, as well as lack of emotional support, particularly from the husband.

The effectiveness of IMD is largely impacted by the mother's mental preparedness, self-confidence, and emotional support in addition to medical problems, which makes these psychological elements crucial to research. For instance, a mother who has a husband's support may feel more at ease, motivated, and confident to start IMD right away, but a mother who doesn't have support may have worry or uncertainty that makes it more difficult to carry out. So that treatments to promote the success of IMD might be more complete, embracing both physical and emotional dimensions, psychological issues need specific emphasis.

One of the important psychological factors, but often overlooked in the context

of the success of EBI, is maternal emotion regulation. Emotion regulation refers to an individual's ability to manage and express emotions adaptively in various situations, including stressful conditions such as during childbirth (Puspitasari et al., 2022). Mothers with good emotion regulation skills tend to be more prepared to face the process of childbirth and breastfeeding, and have greater self-control to adapt to postpartum changes (Nurfadhillah, 2023).

In terms of biology, effective emotional control is linked to heightened parasympathetic nervous system activity and decreased sympathetic nervous system activation, both of which lower cortisol and other stress hormone levels. The oxytocin hormone, which is essential for uterine contractions, the let-down reflex, and the development of an emotional link between a mother and her child, is secreted in greater amounts when this condition is present (Uvnas-Moberg et al., 2015).

Conversely, mothers with low emotion regulation are more vulnerable to experiencing disorders such as baby blues syndrome or postpartum anxiety, which may hinder the implementation of EBI (Tahir et al., 2018; Nababan et al., 2021).

In addition to psychological factors, social factors such as the support of the husband also play an important role in supporting the success of EBI. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior by

Ajzen, subjective norms in the form of support from close individuals can influence a person's intention and behavior, including in the implementation of breastfeeding practices (Putri et al., 2025).

Husband support can consist of emotional support (providing encouragement and comfort), instrumental support (assisting the mother physically during breastfeeding), as well as informational support (seeking and conveying information related to EBI). A study by Aryani and Kartono (2021) showed that mothers who received full support from their husbands were more likely to perform EBI successfully. Recent worldwide research supports this result, showing that women motivation, confidence, and success breastfeeding are greatly impacted by the active involvement and support of their fathers, particularly throughout the early years of a baby's life (Gebremariam et al., 2024).

Seventy percent of the ten postpartum moms who participated in an initial study conducted through interviews in Kejuden Village reported feeling unsafe during their first breastfeeding experience, and fifty percent said their husbands did not actively support exclusive breastfeeding (EBI). According to these data, moms' emotional preparedness and husbands'

support are critical components of EBI's success.

However, most previous studies have placed greater emphasis on medical factors such as the condition of the baby and the mother, while psychological and social factors have not yet been thoroughly explored. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the correlation between emotion regulation and husband support on the success of EBI.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach. The study population was all postpartum mothers (0–7 days) who performed EBI in Kejuden Village during June 2025. The sampling technique was purposive sampling with a total sample of 30 mothers. The inclusion criteria in this study were mothers who gave birth normally, mothers who performed EBI accompanied by health workers/midwives, mothers who were willing to become respondents, mothers whose babies were in a healthy condition, and mothers who had a husband/partner living together. In order to screen respondents, an initial interview was used to gauge their willingness, partner support, and IMD experience. This was bolstered by a check of medical records to confirm the baby's condition, the manner of delivery, and the help of

medical professionals. Meanwhile, the exclusion criterion in this study included mothers with mental health disorders. The research instruments comprised the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and the Postpartum Partner Support Scale (PPSS). The success of EBI was assessed based on initiation within the first hour, skin-to-skin contact for ≥ 60 minutes, and effective sucking. Data were analyzed using the chi-square test with a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1.
Frequency Distribution of Maternal Emotion Regulation

Emotion Regulation	f	%
Low	12	40.0
Moderate	10	33.3
High	8	26.7
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Most mothers had low emotion regulation (40%), moderate (33.3%), and high (26.7%).

Table 2.
Frequency Distribution of Husband Support

Husband Support	f	%
Low	7	23.3
Moderate	17	56.7
High	6	20.0
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Most mothers received support from their husbands in the moderate category (56.7%), low (23.3%), and high (20%).

Table 3.
Frequency Distribution of the Success of EBI

Success of EBI	f	%
No	14	46.7
Yes	16	53.3
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data, 2025

A total of 53.3% of mothers successfully performed EBI, while 46.7% did not succeed.

Emotion Regulation	Success of EBI						ρ
	No		Yes		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Low	10	83.3	2	16.7	12	100	0.003
Moderate	3	30.0	7	70.0	10	100	
High	1	12.5	7	87.5	8	100	
Total	14	46.7	16	53.3	30	100	

Source: Primary Data, 2025

There was a significant correlation between emotion regulation and the success of EBI ($p = 0.003$).

Table 5.

Correlation Between Husband Support and the Success of EBI

Husband Support	Success of EBI						ρ
	No		Yes		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Low	6	85.7	1	14.3	7	100	0.036
Moderate	7	41.2	10	58.8	17	100	
High	1	16.7	5	83.3	6	100	
Total	14	46.7	16	53.3	30	100	

Source: Primary Data, 2025

There was a significant correlation between husband support and the success of EBI ($p = 0.036$).

DISCUSSION

1. Maternal Emotion Regulation

Most moms in Kejuden Village (40%) have poor emotional regulation, according to research findings. This condition is consistent with research showing that poor maternal emotional control during childbirth is influenced by various factors, including physical and psychological stress and a lack of social support (Nababan et al., 2024).

The release of the hormone oxytocin, which is essential for uterine contractions and the breastfeeding reflex, can be inhibited by negative emotions like fear and anxiety, which can affect the efficacy of EBI (Uvnäs-Moberg et al., 2020).

More psychologically prepared for childbirth are mothers who are able to control their emotions (Puspitasari et al., 2022). Antenatal education, stress management classes, and family support—including the husband's active participation during pregnancy in the postpartum period—can all help to promote emotional control (Gebremariam et al., 2024).

2. Husband Support

Based on the research results, it was shown that most mothers in Kejuden Village had moderate husband support at 56.7%. Nevertheless, there were still around 43.3% of mothers who reported low husband support, which could be a

hindering factor in the implementation of EBI. Husband support is very crucial, especially in providing encouragement, assisting in the decision-making process, and ensuring a sense of security and comfort during childbirth.

A study by Aryani and Kartono (2021) at the Nidya Azhar Independent Midwife Practice (IMP) showed that mothers with high husband support were more likely to succeed in performing EBI at 84.8%. Similarly, a study by Debataraja et al. (2021) at Butar Community Health Center, Pagaran District, North Tapanuli Regency, it was found that 33.3% of mothers did not receive husband support.

According to Friedman's theory, as cited in Siregar et al. (2020), family support includes emotional, informational, and instrumental support that can strengthen positive health behaviors. The husband, as part of the mother's primary support system, plays a role in creating an environment that supports the implementation of EBI after childbirth. Husband support is very important in Early Breastfeeding Initiation (EBI) because it serves as a source of motivation, emotional comfort, and physical assistance

needed by the mother immediately after delivery. A supportive husband can help the mother feel calmer and more confident in breastfeeding, thereby enabling the EBI process to be carried out more optimally (Aryani & Kartono, 2021).

Improving husband support can be carried out through family education programs that involve couples in maternal classes, counseling at Integrated Health Post for Child Health (Posyandu), as well as the dissemination of educational materials through easily accessible social media. The "father class" activity is also a strategy that has been proven effective in increasing husband participation in the childbirth and breastfeeding process.

Educational interventions by husbands have also been found to improve breastfeeding success and support (Panahi et al., 2022). In some cultural situations, however, husbands' ability to assist with nursing may be restricted by conventional gender conventions. For instance, many fathers are unwilling to actively participate in breastfeeding because they believe it is exclusively the mother's job (Qin et al., 2024).

3. The Success of EBI

Based on the research results, it was shown that most mothers in Kejuden Village successfully performed EBI at 53.3%. Nevertheless, there were still many who did not succeed in performing EBI, reaching 46.7%. While this success rate is impressive, it falls just short of the Indonesian Ministry of Health's 2024 national target of 55% coverage of Early Breastfeeding Initiation (IMD) implementation (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2024).

This success is quite encouraging, yet it has not reached the ideal figure considering the importance of EBI in supporting exclusive breastfeeding and infant health. The factors influencing the success of EBI include maternal emotional readiness, support from family and health workers, as well as medical interventions during the childbirth process.

A study by Nababan et al. (2021) at Hilisimaetano Regional Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) of Community Health Center, it was found that the success rate of EBI was 77.8%. On the other hand, a study by Mandasari (2022) at Prabumulih City General Hospital also showed that family involvement in supporting EBI could increase the success rate up to 57.1%

According to WHO (2022), EBI is an important process that supports the development of the infant's immune system and strengthens the emotional bond between mother and child. The practice of EBI carried out within the first hour after birth has also been proven to reduce neonatal mortality rates. According to the Indonesian Pediatric Society (IDAI), EBI is an important practice recommended to be performed within the first hour after delivery. EBI enables the baby to have direct skin-to-skin contact with the mother, which is highly beneficial in stabilizing the baby's body temperature, heart rate, and respiration. In addition, this process stimulates the release of the first breast milk colostrum, which is rich in antibodies that can enhance the infant's immunity against infections. EBI also helps accelerate the emotional bond between mother and baby and increases the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Because of its significant benefits, the WHO and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia recommend EBI as a standard procedure in maternity services (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2024).

Efforts that can be carried out to increase the success rate of EBI

include training for midwives and health workers on the importance of EBI, simulation of the EBI process in maternal classes, and the development of clear EBI protocols in every health care facility.

4. The Correlation Between Maternal Emotion Regulation and the Success of EBI

Based on the research results, it was shown that there was a correlation between maternal emotion regulation and the success of EBI in Kejuden Village, with a p value = 0.003. This indicates that mothers who can manage their emotions well are more likely to succeed in performing EBI. A stable emotional condition contributes to the mother's readiness to breastfeed immediately after childbirth and reduces resistance to the EBI process. The correlation between maternal emotion regulation and the success of EBI occurs because the mother's ability to manage emotions affects physical and psychological readiness during childbirth and after delivery. Mothers with good emotion regulation tend to be calmer, more focused, and more confident, thus being better prepared to undergo the EBI procedure without anxiety, fear, or doubt. A stable emotional condition also helps

mothers respond more positively and cooperatively to the support of health workers. It reduces psychological barriers that can interfere with the initial attachment of the infant to the breast. Therefore, good emotion regulation plays an important role in creating conditions that support the success of EBI.

A study by Maulida (2021) in Jakarta supported this finding, in which mothers with low anxiety levels had twice the probability of successfully performing EBI compared to anxious mothers. Similar results were also reported by Sari and Dewi (2022), who emphasized that emotion regulation acts as a mediator in the relationship between stress and early breastfeeding practices.

The theory of emotion regulation, according to Thompson, as cited by Nababan et al. (2021), states that the ability to control emotions is closely related to decision-making ability, including in critical situations such as postpartum. Negative emotions can hinder the release of the oxytocin hormone, which is required for the breastfeeding reflex.

Efforts to improve emotion regulation can involve psychosocial-based counseling, relaxation therapy during pregnancy, and the assistance

of lactation counselors or midwives with a supportive approach. In addition, group approaches such as maternal “support groups” have also been proven to help reduce stress and enhance emotional readiness.

5. The Correlation Between Husband Support and the Success of EBI

Based on the research results, the study revealed a correlation between husband support and the success of EBI in Kejuden Village, with a p value = 0.036. This result reinforces that the husband, as the mother’s primary companion, plays a crucial role in the success of the EBI process. Husband support helps create a sense of security, confidence, and maternal readiness to perform skin-to-skin contact with the baby immediately after birth. The correlation between husband support and the success of EBI occurs because the husband, as the primary companion, plays an important role in providing a sense of security, comfort, and emotional support to the mother during childbirth and after delivery. The presence and involvement of the husband can enhance the mother’s confidence and calmness, which are greatly needed for a successful EBI process. A supportive husband also tends to encourage the mother to

follow the recommendations of health workers, including the implementation of EBI, and to help create a conducive environment for the mother and the baby. Therefore, husband support becomes an important factor that supports the mother’s physical and mental readiness in carrying out EBI optimally.

A study by Mandasari (2022) stated that mothers who received direct support from their husbands had a 1.8 times higher probability of successfully performing EBI. Similar results were also found by Indriani and Khayati (2022), who stated that the presence of the husband during the childbirth process supported quick and appropriate decision-making regarding EBI.

Based on the social support theory by House Rosfiantini et al. (2024), support from close individuals, such as a partner, can take the form of emotional, informational, and practical support, all of which have a positive effect on health behavior. In this context, the husband not only provides permission or moral support but is also actively involved in the EBI process.

Improving husband support can be carried out through community-based family counseling, the distribution of

booklets about the role of fathers in breastfeeding, and the provision of “father class” facilities at integrated health posts (posyandu) or community health centers. Educating couples since pregnancy is the key to forming effective collaboration in supporting EBI

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that some mothers still have low emotion regulation (40%) and husband support that is only categorized as moderate (56.7%), which affects the success of EBI, which remains not optimal (53.3%). There is a significant correlation between maternal emotion regulation and the success of EBI, and husband support is also significantly correlated with the success of EBI. The results of this study can become a basis for more in-depth follow-up studies, such as testing interventions to improve emotion regulation or examining the effect of husband involvement in breastfeeding preparation programs on the success of EBI. Due to its cross-sectional design and single-location execution, this study has limitations in that its findings cannot be applied to other contexts or be used to explain causal correlations. Subjective bias may also be introduced by the questionnaire used to quantify the variables, and factors outside the scope of

the study were not examined. Future research can also expand the scope of regions and variables, including cultural factors, health worker support, and maternal knowledge, to enrich the understanding of factors that comprehensively affect the success of EBI.

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